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THE WAY OF SERVICE

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CONTENTS

Foreword	2
The Voice in the Forest	10
Daridra Narayana	12
The Way of Service	14
An Awakener of Humanity	16
The Gita's Gospel of Work	20
Who Knocks at the Door?	25
The Witness of Sant Tukaram	27
Soldiers of Humanity	30
The Call of the Village	32
The Holy Man of the Hospital	35
Who Will go to the Other Shore?	37
The Waters That Heal	39
"Am I Not Their Brother?"	40
Voices in the Gita	41
Can Man Have Greater Love?	44
The Dedicated Life	45
Krishna's Communism	46
Painting Pictures	47
Pagal	48

IMPORTANT

Kindly note that this is a Double Number for the two months, July and August, 1968.

Our next issue will be out on the first of September, 1968.

—The Manager

FOREWORD

In the following pages have been brought together some of Beloved Dādāji's (Sri T. L. Vaswani's) writings and utterances on the Way of Service.

What is it to serve ? We *talk* of the way of service. We *read* and *hear* of the spirit of service. It was the great good fortune of some of us to have *seen* with our eyes the Spirit of service.

The bodiless spirit of service put on a body and descended into this world of mud and matter,—and lived and moved as a man amongst men. It was our rare fortune to have come in contact with him, to have sat at his feet, to have gazed into the liquid depths of this compassion-filled eyes, to have drank in the inspiration that flowed from his lips, to have been blessed by his hands of mercy,—hands that were never tired in serving others, in giving relief to the poor and broken ones. We called him "Beloved Dādā." "Dā" means "to give." Dādā is he who gives and gives and ever gives, he who is never tired of giving.

Everyday he sat underneath the trees he loved. He gave to the poor who came to him, in hundreds. He gave them money : he gave them food : he gave them clothing. Above all, he gave them the benedictions of his loving heart. And they have met me,—the poor whom he loved and served,—and with tears in their eyes, they have said to me :—"Beloved Dada is gone : to whom shall we go now ? "

Till the last day of his earth-life he served the poor and broken ones. In their faces he beheld the Face of God. The poor, he said, are the Pictures of God ! Every human being, every creature was, to him, an Image of the King

of Beauty. To bring joy into the lives of the struggling, sorrowing ones was one of the deepest aspirations of his life.

A man came to him, one day, and giving him a bundle of notes, said :—"Dadaji! here is money for your temple!" Beloved Dada utilised the amount in feeding the poor, saying :—"The noblest temple is the heart of the poor man who gets his food and who blesses the Name of God!"

One day, I put to him the question :—"What is the way of service?" In answer, Beloved Dada gave me five rules of service. I call them the five fingers of service. Beloved Dada has so much to say concerning these five rules in the following pages.

The very first finger of service,—what is it? If you would serve aright, said Beloved Dada, serve silently! Serve not by cries and clamour, but by silent work. We have for a long time confounded work with noise. We do a little work : we create much noise. We spend our strength in tumults and shouts. There is so much of show and ostentation in our service. True strength is in silent work. The strength of silent work is what India needs, today. For, today, in our public life there is lovelessness, there is the desire to shine and be great. We do a little service today: and after passing an anxious, sleepless night, we get up in the morning and scan the newspapers to see if our little service has been noticed! This is the death of service. I long for the day, Beloved Dada once said, when there will be bands of young men and women who will renounce low ambitions and who will have but this one aspiration,—to be silent servers of India. I shed tears when I think of the shadows we run after,—greatness, name, fame, publicity, popularity, prominence. All these are perishable things. The secret of service is not there, but in the life of those who serve silently.

We were in a garden, one day, when Beloved Dada,

pointing to some beautiful flowers, said :—See how the flowers bloom,—in silence! See how the flowers spread beauty and fragrance,—in silence! Even so must you learn to serve silently! Then, pointing to the sun, Dadaji said :—See how the sun shines,—silently! And as it shines, it sends us warmth and light. The sun serves millions upon millions of earthly creatures whose very life depends upon its existence. The sun serves,—how silently! Even so must you learn to serve silently.

The first finger of service is,—serve silently. And the second finger of service is,—serve humbly! When you serve, do not think that you are dong *maharbāni* to those whom you serve. It should be the other way. When you serve, feel grateful to those who give you a chance to be of service to them. For service is a debt each one has to pay. We have received so many blessings from God. He has blessed us in a variety of ways. We have received so many favours from the universe. In return we must serve those who are less fortunate,—the poor, the lowly, the sick, the afflicted, the stricken, the handicapped. And we must feel grateful to them for they give us a chance to serve them and so to pay off our debt.

Vidyāsāgar was one of the great leaders of Bengal in the last century. He was a rich man, but he wore simple garments,—a shirt and a *dhoti*. One day, he is going along a road, when he finds a poor labourer carrying a heavy load on his back. Vidyasagar's heart moves out to the poor labourer. To him says Vidyasagar :—"Brother, will you let me carry your load on my shoulders?" The labourer does not recognise this great leader of Bengal and gladly permits him to carry the load. Vidyasagar lifts the load and when the destination is reached, he takes out of his pocket a rupee and, pressing it in the hands of the labourer, says :—"Brother, bless me!" Vidyasagar taught

what it was to serve in the right way.

Serve humbly! Therefore seek no reward for your service,—not even a word of thanks! We do a little service and we expect to get some recognition in return. This is not true service. It is business, it is bartering one thing for another.

One day, there came to Beloved Dada a man who said that he had served the country for a number of years and in return he wanted the people to elect him to the Legislative Assembly. Beloved Dada quietly answered :—"Brother, the reward of service is more service!"

Serve humbly! Therefore, you must learn to serve with your hands. Manual work is essential to service. Merely giving money is not service. It is the least part of service. You must learn to serve with your hands. You must not serve as *Chottā Sāhibs.*

Dr. Albert Schweitzer was very fond of relating an amusing incident of his early days in the backwoods of Africa. He was, then, practically all alone in his work. With his own hands, he would cut down trees and carry logs of timber on his strong shoulders for the Hospital Building.

One day, the load is too heavy for him. In front of him is a negro. To him says Dr. Schweitzer :—"Brother, will you give me a helping hand?" What answer does the negro give? "Hey, Mister!" says the negro; "don't you know, I am educated?" And Dr. Albert Schweitzer smiles and says :—"I am happy, I am not educated!"

The third finger of service is,—serve lovingly! Pour love into your service! How often do we become harsh with those whom we seek to serve! We give a few coins to a beggar and we speak harsh words to him. "Why have you come to bother me?" "See that you do not show me your dirty face again!" I have heard these words uttered, again and again, by some of my rich sisters and brothers

to the poor, who come to them for help and succour. This is not true service. Serve lovingly,—said Beloved Dada. Therefore, identify yourselves with those whom you serve. They are not apart from you; they are a part of you.

Many years ago, I read of an English woman. She goes to Africa to serve the negroes. This white woman carries a basket of fruits, sweets and other things to the little children. The negro-children are tempted but they run away from her. And now the woman knows that the children do not draw near to her because of the colour of her skin. The next day, she paints her face black. And the children come running to her. She serves them lovingly.

As you grow in the spirit of loving service, you will find that your circle of service will widen more and more. Perhaps, you will start with serving members of your community. Gradually, your circle of service will grow wider : you will serve your country, your nation : then you will serve the human race. Your circle of service will widen still more, and one day you will begin to realise that to serve aright is to serve brother birds and animals. For animals and birds are members of the one family of creation. You will thus grow into a cosmic consciousness. You will grow into the consciousness that belonged to Krishna and Buddha and Jesus and Nanak and St. Francis and Sant Tukaram,—and to Beloved Dada and Gandhiji in our own days.

Have birds and animals no rights? We kill them : we shoot them : we inflict cruelty upon them : we torture them in our laboratories. Have they no rights?

If there was one thing Beloved Dada could not understand, it was man's cruelty towards his dumb, defenceless brothers, birds and animals. And he went about saving as many birds and animals as he could from the cruel knife

of the butcher.

What is the fourth finger of service? Beloved Dada said :—"If you would reform the world, begin with yourself!" Let each one mend his own life! Do not interfere with others. Service is not interference. A true server realises that he must mend his own life.

Many years ago, Swami Rama Tirtha had an advertisement inserted in the "Tribune." In the advertisement were the words, "Wanted Reformers," in big black type, and underneath it were the following words in thin type:—"Who are prepared to reform themselves." I think he got no response to this advertisement. But this is the fourth finger of service.

And the fifth finger of service, in Beloved Dada's words, is :—"If you would serve aright, cultivate the soul!" Cultivate the soul! Therefore, know that you are only a tool, an instrument. God is the One Worker. Cultivate the soul! Therefore, do not confound the means with the end. Cultivate the soul! Therefore renouncing all egoism and selfishness, become instruments in the Hands of the Eternal *Shakti* that shapes the lives of individuals and nations.

Cultivate the soul! As you walk the way of service you will find that some will praise you, some will blame,—even persecute,—you. Be indifferent to censure and applause. Cultivate the soul! Therefore have faith in God, in yourselves and in the universe. This triple faith will unite all mankind and usher in a new era of peace for which the tortured soul of humanity has cried, again and again! Cultivate the soul! Therefore, let us realise that we are here for a special purpose. Therefore, let every day of our life be a day of search for the better, for that spiritual perfection without which life can have no purpose or meaning.

To a shop I went, many years ago. In this shop was a

vending machine. It was out of order. On it were written the words :—"This machine taketh; it giveth not," i. e. if you put a coin in the slot of the machine, nothing will come out of it. Are we not, so many of us, like this machine? We take : we do not give anything in return. We eat to our fill. Do we think of those, who go to sleep, every night, on empty stomachs? We fill our wardrobes to overflowing. Do we think of those who have nothing with which to cover themselves in the cold of wintry nights?

Sometime ago, at a late hour of the night, I moved out to survey the situation. I carried with myself some blankets. What did I see? I found many sleeping on the roadside with nothing over them, nothing underneath them. And I saw one old man sitting crouched. I said to him :—"Bābā, why are you sitting up at this late hour of the night? Why don't you lie down ?" To my eternal shame, he said :—"If I lie down, I find it too cold. And so I sit with my knees pressed to my chins. And I shall continue to sit in this position, until tomorrow's sun comes to warm my aching bones!" As I heard these words, my eyes were touched with tears. And I looked up at the heavens, and out of my sad heart went forth a cry :—"When will the poor come to their own?"

And I offered a small prayer,—the prayer of Shāntideva,—which Beloved Dada taught us, many years ago :—

May I be for all beings
A healer of pain!
May I be to all who ail
A doctor and a nurse!
May I give food and drink to all
Who suffer from pangs of hunger and thirst!
May I be to the poor

A treasure untold!
May I be a defender of those
Who forsaken lie on the roadside!
May I be to those who long for the Other Shore
A boat and a bridge!
May I be a lamp that holds the light
To those who lose the way!

In these few simple words is enshrinded the message of the following pages. May it ring in our hearts and inspire us to walk the way of service and live the only life worth living,—the life of sympathy, service and sacrifice !

J. P. VASWANI

THE VOICE IN THE FOREST

I WANDERED far and wide. And shunning the crowds of men, I went up hills and to river-banks and secluded spots.

I disappeared in a forest,—in search of God. And there I heard, one day, a Voice. It said :—"I am with thee. Why wanderest thou? I have led thee into darkness : through the *yoga* of darkness shall I lead thee into the Light! I have been with thee in thy work. Remember, work is, also, an instrument of My Will : and man's work is not 'design' but 'Destiny' appointed by the Eternal."

And I said :—"Yes : I have wandered far and wide. And sometimes I have heard tunes but lost them! Can I recover them? And know their meaning? And what shall I do?"

And the Voice said :—"There is but one thing to know : it is the meaning of life and its quest. The one thing, the greatest thing, is Love. And Love is an unspoken Reality, but not unseen. And when you see Love, even in the shadows and darkness of life, there is no more to ask, no more to find!"

And I asked :—"What shall I do to see Love?"

And the Voice said :—"Something better than doing. Silently gather! Each day Eternity pours two treasures,—light and darkness. Silently gather them! Out of the two springeth Love. Through the 'dark night of the soul' must a man go, if he would grow in the love which is not softness but the strength of self-giving, the joy of self-renunciation. Silently gather these two treasures of Eternity!"

And I asked :—"Must I not, then, dwell in the forest, away from the haunts of men?"

The Voice said :—"No ! Go back to the world! There,

in the struggle and tears of life, have I made My home. There shineth My Love. You will not see it in isolation. Be in the world, but remain uncontaminated. Be in the world : for in sorrow and suffering are they,—My children, broken and bruised, who have not yet, alas! seen the glory of the *Ātman*, the Self! Go and serve them!"

I said :—"But in service, the 'ego' is up. I have known men who served greatly, but great was their pride and love of power."

The Voice said :—"Yes; many who serve, alas! go astray, wandering in the dark *māyā* of pride and power. Serve not like them! Serve non-egoistically! Serve with a child's heart! Serve as serveth the Flute! Serve and sing! Sing My Name! Sing it on the flute of thy heart! Sing it so that others, too, may sing with thee! Sing and serve!"

And I heard the Song of the Flute! It ravished my heart. Who sang the Song? He whose Voice spake unto me the words of wisdom.

And He withdrew the veil and I beheld the beauty of His Face. I fell at His Feet! I adored Him, and He vanished! Sri Krishna, the King of the Forest, the King of my Heart! And I came back to the world and Him I seek to serve,—in man and bird and beast.

DARIDRA NĀRĀYANA

They called him by many names. The one epithet he appreciated much was:—Friend of the poor, *Daridra Nārāyana.*

Krishna could not be a Friend of the idler. The Gita is eloquent with a great message of action.

How sad to think that there are poor men,—honest, simple, loving, God-fearing,—who are trampled upon by the proud of power and riches! And against the pride of power and wealth, the worship of money, Krishna protested, again and again.

He heard the murmuring pain of the poor, the lowly and the lost : he entered into sympathy with them and with those who were afflicted with suffering and disease. He healed the sick. He became a physician of the body and the soul. He laid his hand on the heart of the homeless and made them strong and whole.

He left the rich feast of a Rãjā to eat a poor man's saltless vegetable with joy. The poor man was Vidura,—his *bhakta.*

God is the Great Wandering Brother of the poor. He wanders from place to place to bless and heal the broken ones.

Indra, the great god, is angry, we read, when people turn away their thoughts from him to Krishna. The gods have greatness, not perfection. And the simple, in a sense, are greater than the gods! Indra, in his anger, calls up winds and clouds, and flings them against those who give allegiance to Krishna. Some of his men leave him in fear of Indra. "But," says the Ancient Record, "the cowherds remain with Krishna." Yes,—the poor cowherds remain loyal to the Lord. Krishna dwells in the cottage : Krishna seeketh not the palace and the temple.

A KING built a Crystal Temple. He spent lakhs of rupees to make it the noblest building in the realm. But he ordered that the Temple was not for the poor. None of them must enter it.

And there came to the town a *sādhu* (a holy man). And he sat under a tree and worshipped the Lord. And thousands thronged to join the *sādhu* in his worship under the tree. The Temple looked a deserted place.

The king offered bags of money to all who would come and worship in the Temple.

"No," said they, "our place is by the side of the *sādhu* under the tree."

The king met the *sādhu* and said to him :—"A Crystal Temple have I built. It cost lakhs. It is beautiful. I request you to come and worship there."

Then spake the *sādhu* to the king :—"Sire! your Crystal Temple has cost lakhs, but it is not beautiful, for Krishna is not there. He dwells in the cottages of the poor. And the poor you have turned away from the Temple. I cannot come to your Temple until the poor have blest it!"

KRISHNA points out to Arjuna in the Gita that the true man is a man of *dāna* : he gives! Give to the needy of your money. Yet more than money is sympathy, is love of the heart. Better than all gifts is the gift of yourself!

There are those who give,—to receive applause. But a few there be who give : they have but little : they give it in sympathy and joy : they believe in the bounty of life : and in their eyes shines the Krishna-Light.

They give not as do those who say they will give only to the deserving. They give as giveth the Sun its light to the good and the evil. They give, for to them hath been given the *Guru-mantra* :—"To give is to live, and to hold back is to turn away from the Light and pass into the night!"

THE WAY OF SERVICE

At a small fair in a quiet little village I saw him. They had come together,—men, women and children,—from neighbouring hamlets : they had put on new clothes of different colours that day. One there was in the crowd who easily attracted attention. He played upon the flute : and, as I heard him, I opened the window of my heart to let in more and more of the melody of his song.

I wished to know all I could of this man with music in him. He was there, I learnt, not to win a street-singer's meagre reward : he was there, for he loved the people. He lived, I learnt, in a little house on the roadside.

I called on him a day after the fair. There was in him the soul of a child and the mind of a sage. His one devotion was to his flute which he played upon most wonderfully in his house and in the street, the market and the field, on the hill-top and by the side of the stream. I called on him in the evening : he greeted me with glad remembrance. I was there, I said, to make his *darshana* and to hear him sing and speak to me.

I asked him what was the secret of the "greatness" of which men and nations were in such weary quest.

"Greatness," said the Flute-player, "is the mask put on by the petty-minded. If you, my child, would love, renounce greatness. Strive not to be great but to be a servant of Humanity,—a servant of all Life."

"The way of service?" I asked.

The Flute-player had travelled much. He had met many minds. He had meditated much on nature, its beauty and grandeur,—on life, its pain and strife,—on history made by the broken dreams of God's rebels,—the

dreams of Truth and Beauty and Freedom disturbed, again and again, by power and pride.

The Flute-player paused for a few moments, then said :– "As to the way of service, the one thing to do is to *unveil illusions*. Each age has its illusions : and what is called progress is often a climb from illusion to illusion. The other-world illusion has played its part in human life. Yet another is the illusion of civilisation."

Proceeding further, the Flute-player said :—"To unveil illusion is to see the Beautiful, is to behold the *Ātman*, the Spirit within. Money, fame, titles, power,—utilities,—are sought by men who have not the vision that grows out of *gnāna*, knowledge. Do you see the Beautiful in the struggles and conflicts of your life? If not, you have not learnt to tread the path of service."

I asked how to him had come the knowledge of the One, how he had become a Singer, a Flute-player, a Worshipper of the Beautiful.

Then he told me how sorrow had entered into his heart and sorrow had turned into Song.

Note after note of sorrow was sounded by his flute. At its heart was the yearning of one who loved nature and life and sang to peasants and labourers and the poor village-folk the Song which ravished their hearts. Out of his sorrow he had built his art. In the dark waters of sorrow had he seen the Beauty that is God.

And before I took leave of him, he played upon his flute sounding through it notes of the strangest Beauty. And when I asked him what they meant, he looked into my eyes and said :—"Follow where the flute is leading : for 'tis the beauty of suffering that makes life rich and strong and free in this bitter world of hate and strife."

AN AWAKENER OF HUMANITY

MEDITATING on St. Francis,—his wonderful life and his illuminating "Sayings,"—I have asked myself, again and again :—"Who is he?"

He reminds me of some of the *rishis* (seers) of India, some of the *fakirs* (renouncers) and *dervishes* (contemplatives) of the East.

Francis renounces everything : he possesses nothing : he is Christ-possessed. In poverty is his joy, for his master, Jesus, he knows, was poor. Francis shows the beauty and fascination of the simple life. He is, he says, betrothed to "Lady Poverty" : he rejoices in the betrothal. His very soul sings in the words :—"Poverty is the virtue which makes the soul, while still restrained on earth, converse with the angels in heaven."

Brought up as a prince, he flings away riches. As a true disciple of Christ he reflects, by day and night, the radiance of holy poverty. At night, he sleeps on the ground and has under him nothing but a little straw. He has discarded all pillows.

Francis moves out from place to place : he has no money in his pocket. Money is a burden! He goes out to preach with light steps, with joy in his heart. He sweeps out the churches with a broom, his anxiety being to keep the churches clean. He washes dishes in other people's kitchen. He begs bread from door to door. But he is cheerful, happy : there is a song on his lips.

He believes in the sanctity of manual labour and he sets an example to others by toiling with his hands. "Idleness," he says again and again, "is the enemy of the soul. The servants of God must always be either at prayer or employed

in doing some good work."

In the Cross is his perfect joy. Therefore, he kisses the lepers and is happy to be a servant of the poor. "Rejoice," he says, "when you converse with persons who are mean and despised by the world." His is no hunger-born socialism : his is a socialism of the Spirit. It is sung in rapturous songs and lived, even today, by some of the *dervishes* and *fakirs* of the East. "When you see a poor man," says Francis, "you should remember in whose name he came, that of Christ, who took upon himself our poverty and our infirmity. This man's poverty and infirmity is for us, as it were, a mirror wherein we can gaze and devoutly consider the poverty and infirmity of our Lord Jesus Christ."

One day, indeed, when a poor man asked an alms of Francis, the saint, in a temporary lapse, forgot his usual custom and passed by the poor man unheeded. But speedily, Francis recollected himself, ran after the poor man, and liberally relieved his wants. That very day, Francis made a solemn promise to God that he would never again refuse an alms to any poor man who would ask it of him for the love of God. And this promise, we may be sure, Francis faithfully kept till the day of his death.

Francis meets, one day, a poor man laden with a heavy burden : Francis lifts the load on his own shoulders and carries it for him. One other day, Francis, meeting a poor man, puts off his own mantle and gives it to him, saying :—"This mantle was with me but as a loan until such time as I should find one poorer than myself."

Francis washes the feet of the lepers and cleanses their wounds. One day, a leper meets him : he empties his purse in the leper's hand. Francis would not send away even the robbers. He would be like the sun that giveth its light to the just and the unjust. Some robbers break into one of his "retreats," and are driven away by the guardian

of the place. Francis learns of it and immediately sends them the bread prepared for his own meals and a gentle message of love : and they come and fall down at his feet!

In a period, smitten with scramble for money and power, Francis shows the Way of a New Life. It is the way of simplicity. "Pure and holy simplicity," he says, "confounds the wisdom of this world, and the wisdom of the flesh."

He does not forget that the rich, too, must be treated as brothers. "Do not judge," he says, "nor despise the rich, who live at ease and who wear fine clothes, for God is their Saviour as well as ours. We ought to honour them as our brothers, for we all have the same Creator."

Not class-conflict, not hate, not violence, but peace is his watch-word. "Go, preach peace to men!" he says.

In love and utter simplicity, Francis mingles with the poor. He admits no one to his Order who will not strip himself of all things, retaining nothing for himself. Francis believes profoundly in the teaching of his Master, "Go and sell all thou hast and give to the poor !"

A peasant meets Francis, saying to him :—"O saint of God! I long to serve God. Blessed am I to have met you! Accept me in your Brotherhood, and tell me what I should do to please you."

Francis says to him :—"Brother! if you will, indeed, be of my company and my interior life, go part with all your goods and give them to the poor."

Francis understands what a blessing it is to belong to the brotherhood of the poor. "It were a quicker journey to God from a hut," he says, "than from a palace." And poorer and purer than the "poor" are birds and animals. How much Francis loves them!

A youth has caught a number of turtle-doves and is taking them to market. He meets Francis on the way. "I pray thee, give me these gentle birds," says the saint.

The good youth gives them all. And Francis receives them into his bosom, talks to them tenderly, and builds nests for them all.

A fisherman brings to Francis a water fowl. Francis accepts the bird, then opens his hands to let it fly away. Another fisherman brings to him a great fish alive. Francis puts it back into the water of the lake. He speaks to swallows : he preaches to birds.

St. Francis was a brother of all animals, a brother of life, a brother of all creatures. In his heart he communed with the Brotherhood of Life. An influence moved out of him, a strange, psychic influence : it enveloped others with the tenderness and love of his heart which felt for all creatures, human and sub-human.

He met, one day, a wood-cutter, chopping down a tree. To him, Francis spake :—"Brother! do not chop off the whole tree, but give it a chance to grow up again." And Francis offered him his food for the day.

Francis, like Buddha, embraced all creatures in love. Buddha carried on his shoulders a goat, which was being led to the sacrificial altar, and, meeting the king of that place, said :—"Sire! I offer myself as a sacrifice in the place of this poor, helpless, bleating goat." And the king was so moved that he released the goat.

Francis became the great awakener of his age. A new awakening is the world's piteous need, today. New sons and daughters of Krishna and Buddha, of Mahavira and Francis, are needed, today, to reveal anew the beauty of reverence for life,—sons and daughters, who would, renouncing eminence and honours, greed and greatness, be among the servants of animals and humanity.

THE GITA'S GOSPEL OF WORK

MAN is fettered,—says a Russian thinker. Man longs to be free. Man must work in the right spirit to achieve freedom. *Karma*, activity, is an imperfect element in the life of man. Not without reason does the modern man talk of "activity."

But what many of us speak of as "activity" is often distraction, nervous excitement, destruction. Our activity is often of the aggressive type. And what do we gain? Dust and ashes. We work only to kick up dust. This is not the activity which the Gita enjoins on us. This "activity" the Gita calls *vikarma*, —misdirected work. So much of our activity is loss of energy. It is disintegration. The right kind of work is that which is in accord with *dharma*.

In India there was a school of thought which taught that all action must be renounced, for all action sprang from "illusion." Prabhākar, at a later date, took up this teaching and emphasised the thought that knowledge, not work, was the supreme end of life. Indeed, at one time, the idea among many intellectual Indians was in favour of complete withdrawal from the world and its work.

Krishna holds that three *karmas* (activities), namely *yagna* (sacrifice), *dāna* (charity) and *tapas* (self-control), must not be given up. These three, Krishna teaches, are as "purifying waters" for the heart. They help our spiritual evolution. There are duties to God, to parents and ancestors, to teachers, to society and humanity, to all creatures. All these duties must be done,—without attachment.

In an ancient record we read that when Rama was in exile, Sita said to him :—"Let us renounce the world and become hermits." Sri Rama said to her :—"I renounce

the pleasures of a transient life : I must not renounce my duty. I must work for society."

The following words from the Gita are significant. The Lord says :—

Activity, Arjuna! is better than inertia.
Act, but be not dominated
By desires or appetites.
Act, but with self-control.
The world is in fetters bound.

Painfully true it is that men act often as "prisoners,"—of *trishnā* or desires. Both capitalism and communism have gone astray. Capitalism grinds men to powder : communism is infected with the poison of hate. He who would follow the teaching of the Gita must get out of the "prison of activity" by a series of steps in the movement back to God. We must not forget the value of "contemplation": the Gita is careful to point out that "contemplation" is to be reflected in action, in the day-to-day activities of the world.

Arjuna! so Krishna teaches, this little "I" is the great illusion out of which are the actions of the majority of men : and so the world, "imprisoned in its activity," moves from suffering to suffering. "Arjuna!" says Krishna, "act but perform action sacramentally. Arjuna! make every act a sacrament, an offering to God, not an expression of the little, aggressive ego that is at the root of the world's sorrow."

The teaching of the Gita combats the school of thought which rejects action and glorifies inaction. Sri Krishna points out that *karma* or action is a necessity of human life. We are in the body : so we cannot stand wholly aloof from action. From birth to death every one of us is constrained to move in a world of work. Nature, *prakriti*, prompts us to action. Life cannot be supported if you eliminate all action. Universal inaction would bring the world to

ruin. Sri Krishna says :—"Arjuna! I Myself set an example of work. I act in order that the people may know how to proceed rightly on the path of action."

Sri Krishna further points out that it is not *action* which binds. The binding quality of action lies in *trishnā*, desire. Act, Arjuna! but abandon desire.

Not every one who acts, then, is in bondage. It is not right to say that all action is sinful. Forego the actions which spring out of desire. But this does not mean that you should lie inactive. Make your actions an offering to God, a *yagna* for God's creatures who are in suffering and pain.

"When all desires which live in the heart disappear, then the mortal becomes Immortal!" This thought of the Upanishads is developed in the Gita. Renouncing all desires, go forth into the world as they do who have seen the Secret and who would serve the Eternal in the very heart of the world's conflict and chaos. This is, to my mind, one of the great truths affirmed by the Gita :—Renounce all selfish ego-centred desires, but do not shun action. "Casting all thy works on Me," says Krishna to Arjuna, "put away thy fever,—the fever of desires,—and stand up to fight for the right!" Therefore does the Gita thrill our hearts and will thrill again, I believe, the mind and heart of the new epoch before us.

In the midst of all your activities, never forget the *Ātman*. And the call of the *Ātman* is to the Eternal. To His disciple, Krishna says :—"Arjuna! act, but do not be a prisoner in action. Never forget that thou art a pilgrim to eternity. Therefore act, seeing the one *Ātman* in all. And know that the *Ātman* calls thee to bear witness to the one Spirit in all creatures." The Gita says :—

Who sees the separate lives

Of all creatures of the earth,
Of men and birds and beasts
And of the worms that creep
And the fish that swim in the watery deep,—
Who sees them all united
In the Spirit, the one Eternal God,—
Sees them brought forth from Him,
His hidden depths,—
He truly seeth Him.

Sometime ago, I read a pretty Russian story. A rich Russian woman walking, one day, sees a prisoner clad in rags being brought along a street in chains. Seeing him, the Russian woman rushes to his side and for a moment looks at his face. Then she bends very low before him in deep regard and empties her purse into his hands. Once more, she looks at him in silence, bows to him again, and then departs. To this woman, perhaps, came the Gita's vision of the Lord in a poor shrivelled, starving, suffering prisoner.

Consider the lotus. It is still and it grows in beauty : and the face of the lotus is ever raised to heaven. So is the life of him who truly acts. His action is dedicated to God. In the midst of the world, in the flow of the ever-changing incidents of life, he is not disturbed in his heart, but he grows lotus-like in beauty. He speaks not much. And when he opens his mouth, he speaks to help and to serve. But in the petals of his heart he sings the Song of the Beloved,—the song of the Dedicated Life.

Many years ago, I read of Flammarion, the well-known astronomer of France. He was over eighty years when he passed away. Once they asked him what was the secret of his life and of his power of work. "Yes," he said, "I have worked steadily ten hours a day." And they referred to his

tremendous work, every day, blended with serenity of mind. "What is your secret?" they asked him. He gently said :—"I have never been ambitious!" He paused, then said :—"How can I look at the heavens and be ambitious?" Flammarion lived in the presence of the Infinite. Flammarion was not ambitious. He only longed to serve suffering humanity.

So does the true *karmi*, the man of action. He lives in the presence of the Infinite and has compassion for the creation that groaneth in pain. His heart is humble : and with the sweet incense of compassion in his heart he fain would serve men and women and birds and beasts and leaves and flowers and hills and streams and rocks and seas.

He who rightly acts is truly wise. He acts, yet has no desire for "fruits" of action. He acts, yet is not imprisoned in action's chain. He acts, yet is free. Having conquered desire, he needs nothing. "Thou, Krishna! Thou art my all. And having Thee, I need not anything," he says. He acts, yet calleth nothing his own. He acts but is not bound. Broken are his bonds : illuminated is his heart. His life becomes a mirror which reflects the One Supreme.

This message gave the Lord five thousand years ago. This message may yet save modern civilisation. I hold that His life and teaching are not for India alone : they are for the world. And centuries well may meet at the Lotus-feet of Him who "emptied" Himself of His glory and played with the little ones,—free children of the earth and space,—and loved the cows and birds and loved the forlorn and forsaken ones and loved, too, each lotus of the lake and each lily of the field.

WHO KNOCKS AT THE DOOR?

She is a village girl. They name her Dayā. Everyday, she takes her father's cattle to the grazing ground. Every evening, she returns with song and music on her lips.

One day, while alone in the grazing field, she hears Voices in the void. Whence are they? What do they signify?

The next evening, as she returns, she looks into the waters. She gazes at a Vision. She hears a Voice saying :—"Krishna! Krishna!"

On reaching her house she meets her mother, and asks :—"Who is Krishna? Where is He?"

The mother answers :—"Krishna is the Lord of Life. And in the Forest dwells He."

Daya gets no sleep at night. Her thoughts are filled with Him, the Lord of Life. In the house they are all asleep. Daya gently bows at the feet of her father and mother. Daya looks tenderly at her brothers and sisters. Daya stands on the threshold.

Then, with eyes gleaming with love, she looks once more at her father and mother and brothers and sisters. In the dark of the night, she ventures out alone, to meet Krishna in the Forest!

She enters the Forest. She shouts out thrice :—"Krishna! Thou art a Forester! I come to dwell with Thee, Lord of Life!"

But there comes to her a Voice from the woods :—"Return to thy home! Not in the Forest mayst thou find Me!"

Daya, obedient to the Voice, returns. And, day after day, she hears the Voice, not knowing what It means.

Again and again, she moves out to see : but the Vision is not there!

It is noon. There is a knock at the door.

Daya gets up to open the door. What does she see? A poor, old, shrunken widow!

"Mother!" asks Daya, "what may I do for you?"

"I am thirsty," says the widow, "and I have hungered the whole day : and I have not a piece of cloth to cover my half-naked body."

Daya enters her kitchen and prepares meals. Daya opens her box and takes out a garment given her by her mother some days ago and intended to be worn by her on special occasions.

Daya places the meals and the garment at the feet of the old woman.

Then Daya goes to fetch water. She returns.

"Mother!" she says, "here is water!"

And she presses the cup to the widow's lips. When, lo! the widow is not there! Nor her little cottage!

A beautiful house suddenly rises to view. Shining lights are there. And music floods the place. And in the house is seated Krishna playing upon the Flute!

Daya falls at His feet.

Krishna blesses her and says:—"That poor old widow was my *rupam* (form).

"I was thirsty, and thou didst give me water to drink.

"I was hungry and thou didst feed me.

"I was naked, and thou didst clothe me.

"My vision is thy reward."

Is this story a parable?

Who knocks at India's door with pale face and hungry eyes?

Behold! thirsty and hungry and naked stands Krishna,—the Comrade of the poor!

THE WITNESS OF SANT TUKĀRĀM

TUKARAM belonged to a family of shopkeepers. His father, Bolhoba, and mother, Kanakai, were both devotees of Sri Krishna. Every year, they joined the band of pilgrims who went to Pandharpur to receive Vithoba's blessings. Both lived simple, pure lives, and in their hearts was compassion for the poor and needy.

The father, becoming old, asked his eldest son, Savaji, to take charge of the business. Savaji expressed a wish to be excused : his heart was not in business. His wife died and then Savaji became a *sanyāsin* (religious mendicant) : leaving his home, he went out in quest of God.

Tukaram became responsible for carrying on the shop and maintaining the family. He was honest but was not intended for a life of business. Even in his early years, they who knew him spoke of a dream in his eyes,—the dream of a mystic to whom the Invisible was the One Reality. Yet, for several years, Tukaram did well in business. Then his father and mother died. Tukaram says in one of his *abhangas* :—"When my parents had finished their courses, I was harassed by the world."

Tukaram kept up his shop with care. He worked from morning till night : he did the duties even of a cart-driver, loading bullocks with his own hands. He was not afraid of work and his honesty was well-known. In his modesty, he says, in one of his *abhangas* :—"I was greedy : I desired to get rich quickly."

He began to lose money in business. He spent sleepless nights. Tukaram's second wife, Avāli, came to his help. She was the daughter of a well-to-do shopkeeper at Poona. She raised a loan for Tukaram on her jewels and said to

him :—"I wish to see you set up again in business." She advised him to go to a distant place, named Baleghat. Tukaram went there and traded in salt and sugar. He made a profit.

On his way back to his village, he met a man who was being harassed by some agents of his creditors. The man cried out for help :—"O, for a man to relieve me from my debt and to protect me from being dragged to jail !" To this man in trouble Tukaram gave Rs. 250/-. He not only gave this amount to the man in need but fed, for many days, his family and ten other persons. Tukaram returned to Dehu when he was empty-handed.

When the village-folk at Dehu learnt of what Tukaram had done, they laughed at his "folly." Many said he was a madcap. Tukaram was selfless, but to many, indeed, he appeared to be out of his senses! They mounted him on a donkey with a necklace of onions round his neck, and they had him paraded through the streets of Dehu. Tukaram bore it all patiently and blessed them! Patience, indeed, is a virtue which Tukaram emphasises, again and again, in his *abhangas*. "Be patient," he says. "Continue to think of Vithal without complaint. Bear all suffering in patience, and Vithal, the Beloved, will reveal Himself to you!"

Tukaram asked his brother to bring all the documents, deeds and bonds relating to their business : Tukaram divided them into two parts, gave one to Kanhoba and said to him :—"Brother! I can no longer carry on the shop. Do what you like with these papers : recover the debts, if you will : but leave me!" The second part,—his own share,—Tukaram threw into the river.

Tukaram's heart rejoiced in renunciation. He said to himself :—"I shall bear witness to the Beloved who is *Satya Swarupa* (the Face of Truth Divine)!"

Tukaram loved to walk in the forest, near Dehu. He often

sat there in silence and meditation. The spirit of the forest, the *tapobana*, grew upon him : he often sat underneath a tree and cried out :—"Where, O Vithal! where, Beloved! hast Thou hidden Thyself?"

Tukaram spent part of the day in the service of the village-folk. He executed their errands : he served them free. He served them with the purest motive of offering himself at the feet of the Eternal. "What others called service," Tukaram says, "was to me a sacrifice, a *yagna*, an offering which I placed in reverent love at the Feet of my Beloved. If, indeed, in serving, my body sometimes was inconvenienced or suffered from pain, I said :—"Blessed be this pain : it is a flower I place at the Feet of my Beloved!"

Near the place of his meditations in the forest there was a crop of corn. The owner of the corn often saw Tukaram sitting quietly in the forest. The owner promised to give Tukaram half a maund of grain, if Tukaram would protect the corn from the birds. Tukaram agreed. But when the birds came for a meal, Tukaram said to himself :—"Are not the birds, too, God's creatures,—children of Vithal, the Beloved?"

The birds came, day by day : and Tukaram fed them. The proprietor of the corn came, one day, to see the field. He was taken aback when he found that the whole field was empty. The peasant flew into a rage. Alas! he dragged the Saint by the hair and brought him to the *panchāyat* (the city-council). They heard and they laughed: what else could they do?

Compassion was engraved in the heart of Tukaram. One day, he was attacked by a swarm of bees. He refused to drive them away. More than the things of the earth were, to him, the unseen verities of life.

SOLDIERS OF HUMANITY

India declined in the day she lost contact with life. India confounded meekness with weakness. A new nation cannot be built until the young develop *shakti*.

What is the secret of *shakti?* Not speeches. Not meetings. Not noise and excitement. These are distractions. *Shakti* lies in concentration of powers.

One secret of *shakti* lies in building up constructive qualities. Only in the measure in which the young build up constructive qualities may they help in building up a new Indian nation. My emphasis is upon constructive qualities, not emotions. Young men are emotional. Some of their emotions are beautiful. But mere emotions never built a nation. I find young men come together to listen,—and are moved for sometime. They go home,—the emotions evaporate ! I plead for development of constructive qualities.

These qualities are best built in silence. I believe that strength is gathered in silence. The silent tide comes with strength and power, but noisy waves appear and vanish. Noisy waves come, and are broken into fragments. It is silent service the Mother needs, today.

I interpret history in terms of *shakti*. And history shows how, again and again, a minority,—a dynamic minority of *shakti*-men,—has impressed its will upon the people. A minority of *shakti*-youths can do much for the nation. But they must be men of judgment and faith.

A number of young men in India, today, I find, look melancholy : so many look depressed. Depression is not a mark of him who would grow in *shakti*. He who would grow in the spirit of *shakti* must defy defeat, depression.

His heart must be filled with faith,—in the future of Man. Many obstacles, I know, many difficulties lie along our path. But the man of *shakti* says :—These shall pass away. Difficulties and dangers, obstacles and impediments,—these shall pass away : for the blessings of the Rishis and the Spirit of God are behind us in our work.

When this faith grows in the hearts of young men, they cease to be pessimistic : they become optimistic. Optimism is a constructive quality. One great purpose of the *shakti* movement is to make the young happy. The one great message of this movement is :—Be happy. Be happy, and make others happy.

The crux of many of our problems is the village. Re-build the village, if you would help in building a new civilisation. Re-build the village, if you would see India re-arise, transfigured by her sufferings of centuries. Rebuild the village through new education centres and scientific agriculture and cottage industries. They will build up healthy bodies and strong minds.

It is the strong who sacrifice. The weak cling in fear to life-in-death.

The great task that lies ahead is reconstruction, regeneration. The task demands, not in tens and hundreds but in thousands and tens of thousands, young men of *shakti* who will in silence develop *ātmashakti* (soul-energy) and serve peasants and the neglected classes, the poor and the outcast.

Such volunteers will be our *shakti*-men, our soldiers of Humanity. And their life-blood will be the seed of a New India.

[From an address]

THE CALL OF THE VILLAGE

INDIA's long exile is due, largely, to our shameful neglect of the poor. The exile will not be over until we re-enter into fellowship with the poor.

Educational re-construction is now recognised to be a national necessity. *Swarāj* and mass-education must go hand in hand. There was a time when almost every village in this country had a school. Today, the village-folk are so awfully ignorant. They know nothing of the great forces which shape modern life. They know very little of the culture and ideals which made India great in the long ago. In those days there were "wandering teachers" who moved from village to village and lectured to the masses. Such teachers are needed, today, in this country.

Two of the most educated countries in Europe are Sweden and Denmark. And they both owe not a little to a system of education which reminds one, in several particulars, of the ancient Indian system of "wandering teachers." Denmark is full of village-schools. Folk-schools, they call them. In these Folk-schools students are taught the great traditions of their country. So are the boys and girls brought up in an atmosphere of patriotism. In addition, there are the scientific Folk-schools which teach agriculture, gardening, house-wifery, etc. Such "Folk-schools" for peasants should do much good, specially in those provinces where the main industry is agriculture.

In Sweden, too, the village-schools have done immense good. The Swedish press pays much attention to the village-education, and Swedish professors spend vacations in villages carrying to them the message of modern life. In addition to the professors, there are other lecturers

engaged by village societies. An Indian scholar who stayed in Sweden for some time, writes :—

"These lecturers run about and across the whole country from October to April. They meet one another on the trains and gossip like people of the same trade. They are often the guests of some well-to-do gentlemen in the village, if there is no hotel at the place. I have, thus, spent very pleasant days at the houses of Swedish magistrates, priests, teachers, retail traders, farmers, and working men. A lecturer has the whole day before himself, and he can read the books that he has taken with him on the journey. He is occupied only in the evenings. I often say :—'We are funny people. Our work begins, when other people's work ends.' Lecturers sometimes visit villages situated fifty miles off the railway line. Illustrated lectures are very gratefully appreciated in such remote corners of the country.

"What do these people talk about ? They lecture on everything in heaven and earth, from the nebular hypothesis to the manufacture of soap, and from Tagore to Tutankhamen. Every science and every department of knowledge is represented in the catalogue. Almost all the University professors and school-teachers earn a little extra money by going out and delivering lectures in the villages. The entire learned class of the country is mobilised for this service, and they have a fine *espirit de corps*. They feel that they are the missionaries of culture."

It is high time to spread among the masses a knowledge at once of India's immemorial culture and of the new forces of the modern world. Let us spread this knowledge by means of schools and *satsangs*, *kathās* and *kirtans*, lantern lectures and village exhibitions. And let us have a New Theatre. The plays brought upon the stage now-a-days move in an atmosphere of sex which is uncongenial to our inherited culture. The masses seek the theatre as a source

of amusement and to escape the tyranny of life's rude realities. But the theatre has proved, in serveal cases, to be devitalising: it has communicated pleasure of the senses, not the uplift of life. Some dramatic societies have staged Shakespeare. But they have not become a social force. They have not reached the heart of the masses. Translation is often transformation : and, after all, Shakespeare interprets the life and experiences of Europe. What we need is a series of plays to represent the reality of India's experiences and aspirations.

Some such plays, clean, with faith in the living soul of India, may be drawn from the great store-house of Indian literature. "Shakuntala" and "Rāma Lilā" are both vibrant with a great message, and could be staged with great results. Several plays, again, drawn from the Rājput and Mahrātta history,—a history of chivalry, romance, and courage such as the world has not surpassed,—could be brought upon the stage. Stories of Asokā and Akbar, Rānā Pratāp and Shivāji would thrill any audience. We need, also, a New Drama which may reflect the growing consciousness of India. Most of the dramas staged, today, appeal to a hectric, flashy taste or are misrepresentative,—mere translations of the experiences, ideals, and aspirations of another age and another country than our own. We need not the commercial theatre but a new humanising theatre which may carry to the masses the message of India and the modern life.

Young men are needed to go to villages to launch a crusade of this kind. Here is a test of our intellectual and practical patriotism. And in a new synthesis of the *Satyam, Shivam,* and *Sundaram,*—Knowledge, Service and Beauty,—India will re-gain her soul.

THE HOLY MAN OF THE HOSPITAL

In a Spanish book is given the description of a man who undergoes a tremendous transformation. He is a rich man : he belongs to a family of the nobles. He reads the lives of some holy ones who dedicated themselves to the service of the poor. He makes up his mind to follow in the footsteps of these holy ones. He has large lands : he sells them. He spends his wealth in the service of the poor. He becomes poor himself.

Reduced to poverty, he suffers. And he says :—"Blessed am I! I am purified by suffering." We see him, day by day, communing with the Lord in silent prayer and pouring out his soul in gratitude to the God of mercy. One day, he is so filled with the ideal of identifying himself with the poor, that he parts with his garments and passes them on to a poor beggar. In clothes of poverty he now moves about, devoting himself to the charity of love.

Some look at him and ask him :—"What wilt thou be?"

He says :—"A vagabond of God!"

He becomes a wanderer, in witness to God. Alas! serving the people, he receives abuse and insult. Grateful he is for all the treatment given him by those whom he serves. Some of them know he was a rich man once : now that he is poor, he is respected by none. He turns to God for strength and solace in his loneliness.

One day, sitting in silence, far away from the crowds of men, he cries out :—"To Thee, O Lord! I give thanks and gratitude, for now I see that Thou dost accept the poor offering of my life. Even when so many give me abuse and insults, in Thy mercy, O Lord, Thou dost afflict me with suffering. And this Thou doest, I feel, that my soul may,

through suffering, be purified. Thou, O Lord! dost give me suffering that it may break the fetters of my soul and that I may fly to Thee like a butterfly."

After sometime, a number of people recognise him and say, he was so rich, now he is become poor, and he bears insults even of the poor. When he finds that he is known to a number of men, he leaves the place and goes to another town. There he joins a hospital of mercy to assist in service of the sick and poor. In the hospital he is loved and revered. Outside the hospital, too, they have reverence for him. He is known as the "Holy man of the Hospital." His health is weakened : and, day by day, he fades, yet continues to grow in faith and in love of God and service of the poor.

Here was a man, a true man, a man of God who, having much, renounced it in service of the poor, and accepted poverty and suffering as the discipline God used to purify him. Being purified, his heart attained to illumination, and his illumined soul attained to realisation. Truth is not gained, but truth is realised in self-abnegation, in self-donation to God and the creatures of God. This man, whose very name I have forgotten, lives in my heart as the man who attained to holiness by walking the little way.

"WHO WILL GO TO THE OTHER SHORE?"

THE *Bhagavad Gitā* has influenced India through the centuries. In our own days, the Gitā is a growing influence in Europe and America. I look forward to the day when a Gitā University will be established. Will it be at Kāshi or Kurukshetra or in the South where taught Sri Shankarāchārya, centuries ago?

In the South, too, lived a Saint known as Tiruvalluvar, the author of the book named the *Kural*. It is regarded as the "Fifth Veda."

Tiruvalluvar was, like Kabir, a weaver by profession. He came under the influence of the thought and wisdom enshrined in the Gitā, and became a teacher of spiritual life.

In the *Kural* he calls upon all to do their duty, renouncing all desire for fruits of action.

"Be like a cloud," he says, "that pours water but asks for nothing in return."

There is the secret of true religion. The teacher of the *Kural* asks us to strive for *inner* freedom from the world.

In addition to this ethic of inwardness, the *Kural*, like the Gitā, sounds the note of the ethic of love,—the note of *bhakti*. Life is not meant to be hoarded : life is meant to be given away, given freely to all, given in love and in the spirit of joy. "The man full of love," says the *Kural*, "gives his very bones to others."

So in the *Mahāyana*, the great Saviour named Avalokiteśvara is represented as a "winged steed" and is named "Cloud" (*Valahala*), who carries to the "Other Shore,"—the far-off Bank of Enlightenment or Freedom,—all who wish to go there.

In a beautiful, allegorical story, we read of the "Cloud" as manifesting itself to a company of merchants who have set sail for the "Jewel Isle." They are shipwrecked and fall in the hands of alluring women on another island. The women receive them hospitably but wish to entice them. The women appear beautiful, but finally prove to be man-eating monsters! They are at once alluring and devouring : they represent the world of the senses which tempt us and swallow us.

Over the island of these alluring women moves the figure of the "Cloud," the "Saviour,"—appearing from time to time, soaring through the sky and calling out :—"*Ko pāraga?*" "Who will go to the Other Shore?" It is the cry of the ferryman :—"*Ko pāraga?*" "Who will go to the Other Shore?"

The voice of the "Cloud" is the voice of the *Bodhisattvas*, the Saviours of Humanity. It is the voice which warns us against sensual pleasures. The voice of the "Cloud" is the voice of compassion. It is the voice which calls :—"O ye that wander in darkness and are weary! come out of darkness into light,—the light of the Other Shore where wisdom shines and peace abides!"

It is the supreme voice of the *Bhagavad Gitā*. It says :—"Give! Give!" Give the wealth of your heart, your loving service, your dedicated life! For in agony is the world. Your treasure, sons of the sages of the East! is not your bank accounts or cash certificates,—not your silver, not your gold. Your treasure is the treasure of your heart. The wealth of the world is no better than the world itself,—passing, transient. It is the wealth of loving service which you are asked to give to the poor,—and be blessed!

THE WATERS THAT HEAL

A SAINT and poet of Hindustan sings in one of his beautiful hymns of *Rāma-rasa*. What is *Rāma-rasa*,—the Rāma-joy?

Today, many seek joy in *bhoga*, in pleasures of the senses. Others, again, there are who seek *rasa* or joy in power, domination. These two *rasas* of *bhoga* and power are egoistic. *Rāma-rasa* or the Rāma-joy is fellowship with the poor. We see it illustrated in Sri Rama's life. He has accepted exile for the sake of his father. Rama is wandering in the forest. After some time he halts near the Rishis' *āshramas*. Nearby is a temple tank : its waters have been poisoned. Sri Rama is a lover of the poor. He tells the Rishis :— "You have kept out the poor, the so-called outcasts, and the waters have been poisoned. Pour into the tank the water washing the feet of this outcast woman, and the Temple will flow again with the waters that heal!"

India fell in the day she lost fellowship with the poor. The Hindu sages and saints knew no outcasts. Is there not in all the One Divine Self, the *Ätman? Rāma-rasa* comes of fellowship with the poor. There is joy in service of the lowly and the lost.

I live in the hope of a new mass-awakening. I trust it will be led by spiritual forces. I am happy the name "untouchable" is being wisely displaced by the beautiful word, *harijan*. The evil of untouchability continues. Untouchability must die. And may the day come soon when modern India may prove true to the ancient teaching that there are no untouchables, no outcasts in the Temple of Humanity! For every human being is an image of the King of Beauty : and to serve the poor is to worship the Lord.

[From an address]

"AM I NOT THEIR BROTHER?"

Moniya,—so they called Mahatma Gandhi when he was a boy. One day, he was beaten by some boys in the compound of a temple near his house. He complained to his mother. She said to him :—"Why didn't you hit back?" He said :—"Mother! how can you ask me to hit back? Am I not their brother?"

A few of us were with Gandhi as he walked, one day, along the bridge which leads from Rohri to Sukkur, in Sind. In answer to the question :—"What is the easiest way to God?" Gandhi said :—"To me *sevā*,—service of the poor,—opens the easiest way to God."

When, in 1932, Gandhi went to Londen, he preferred to live in the East End of London,—a quarter of the poor folk. They had free access to him, and children became his friends in his morning walks. He left behind, where he stayed, a spinning wheel and one of his sandals. A poor Londoner, seeing these two simple things of Gandhi, said :—"O, we all liked Gandhi. He got along famous with us people here. Some folks couldn't understand what he meant when he talked about praying and giving up things to the poor. We could understand him, and we loved him!"

VOICES IN THE GITA

TONIGHT let my words be very few and very simple. Truth is simple, and truth is not talkative. The *Bhagavad Gitā* has borne witness through the ages to wonderful truths concerning the deeper values of life. Sometimes, studying the Gita in hours of silence, I have felt as though I were in a Temple listening to temple-bells, ringing with voices, wonderful voices! There is time, I think, to refer,—and very briefly,—to two of these voices.

The first is expressed in the words, "*Uttishtha ! Parantapa!*" (Stand up, O Arjuna!). Every one of us is, potentially, a symbol of Arjuna. And so to every one comes the voice of the Gita :—*Uttishtha!* Stand up! O Arjuna, stand up! What for? The Gita calls us to a cult of manhood. There are wrongs to be righted. There are evils within us and evils outside us. Current education is mistaken, just because it does not develop manhood. I wished the Gita were an integral part of the education of Young India. Arjuna feels despondent, and says to Sri Krishna :—"Master! I cannot fight!" Unto this despondent Arjuna, the Master says :—"*Uttishtha!* Stand up, Arjuna!" For life is a battlefield. Look around you! There are evils: there are cruel customs which must go. Where are Arjunas today, manly men, warriors of the Spirit? Soft men I find in schools and colleges. But to listen to the Gita is to know that soft living is wrong living.

The second voice I hear, as I listen to the temple-bells of the Gita, is :—"*Sarva dharmān parityaja, Māmekam sharanam vraja.*" Sri Krishna says to Arjuna :—"Give up all *dharmas!*" Renounce, renounce the so-called religions. Are they better than creeds and controversies?

"Come alone unto Me!" says Krishna. Alas! we have fought, quarrelled, wrangled in the name of religion. We have made religion a battlefield of sectarianism. All sectarianism must go : creeds must go : labels must go : dogmas must go : ecclesiasticism must go, if, indeed, we are to grow in the life of the Spirit. Renounce creeds, if you would announce the Divinity within you.

To live the true spiritual life, to announce the authentic Gospel of Wisdom, renounce credalism, ecclesiasticism. "Come unto Me!" says the Master. In the first voice, the master-word is, "*uttishtha.*" In the second, the word is "*arpanam.*" The truth of "*uttishtha*" needs to be blended with the truth of "*arpanam.*" Often we stand up with courage to fight evil. But we become aggressive, proud, self-conscious. *Ahankāra* (egoism) sets in. In many cases, men of action are men of *ahankāra.* Ambition grows. We say we are active: we become aggressive! Our activity is often stung by the serpent of ambition.

A cult of ambition is abroad. Sri Krishna rebukes the cult of ambition and calls us to a life of *arpanam*, self-dedication. Activity without *arpanam* becomes destructive. He truly fights who surrenders himself and his work at the Lotus-feet of the Lord. We need the truth of *uttishtha* but, also, that of *arpanam*, self-dedication.

"Work, work," says the modern man. Carlyle preached the gospel of "produce! produce!" This gospel of work has its value. We are working : we are active. But consider calmly what it is we are producing! Abortions? Or children of life and love? We are active often to organise selfishness and hate. Modern life needs to understand the truth that mere activity is not the true goal of life. Let us be active : but let our activity be inspired by a spirit of self-dedication to the Lord. Not the cult of ambition but the call to dedicated life is the Gospel of the Gita.

Blend the truth of *uttishtha* with the truth of *arpanam*, and your life will be filled with joy.

There is the story of an Iranian, a Persian, who is given a manuscript to read. To him the manuscript is a sacred scripture. He reads it carefully. Certain words attract his attention. In rough English translation, they read :— "O labourer! art thou lifting the wood? Lift it in the faith that the wood may help in building the Master's temple! O peasant! art thou collecting cotton? Pick up cotton with the aspiration that thy cotton may become a wick in the lamp of the Master!" There you have, briefly expressed, the beauty of the life of *arpanam*. Yes; lift the wood in the faith that the wood you are lifting may help in building the Master's temple! Yes; collect cotton, but with the aspiration that thy cotton may become a wick in the sacred lamp. Individualism is in the air. The Gita calls us to a nobler vision,—calls us to that Life of the Spirit wherein the individual is "naughted" and the Lord of Love becomes our All-in-all.

[From an address]

CAN MAN HAVE GREATER LOVE ?

THE worst slum in Tokyo is named Shinkawa. It had ten thousand inmates or more. Kagawa built there a little hut for himself. He said :—"My home will be in the midst of the poor!"

His income at that time was about ten dollars per week. He shared his ten dollars with the poor. He let some beggars sleep with him in the hut. From them, alas! he caught the eye disease which made him nearly blind.

A poor inmate in the Shinkawa slum suffered from nightmare. The doctor said the only way to cure the man of his nightmare was to hold his hand at night. Kagawa kept awake, night after night, holding the hand of the poor man until he was cured.

Kagawa believed in the power of love. He never resisted. A poor slum-dweller came to him, one day, and said to him :—"Give me your shirt." Kagawa passed on his shirt to the poor man. Yet another asked for his coat. He put it off and passed it on to the beggar. On another occasion, a poor man said to Kagawa :—"Give me your trousers." Kagawa put on a strip of cloth and gave his trousers to the needy person.

One day, Kagawa was confronted by some beggars. They asked for money. He had nothing in his pocket to give. The beggars got angry : they assaulted him and knocked off one of his teeth. He complained not!

Kagawa believed in the power of sympathy and love. "We have only to be patient with them," he said. "Give them more of sympathy and love, for the One Lord dwells in them, too. With the power of love, we can change them, make them new children of God."

THE DEDICATED LIFE

BOTH science and religion are born of a cosmic consciousness. Science and scientific research grow out of a study of the wonder of the world. And religion is neither a creed nor a dogma but, essentially, a reverence attitude to the Cosmic Mystery that fills nature, and is revealed in the heart and in the great ones of humanity.

When the cosmic sense is awakened, one realises the littleness of the things we seek and the plans we pursue. "Vanity of vanities!" says the awakened man. How little we know! How little we really achieve! As Goethe says in a poem of his :—"A small ring limits our life." We think mightily of ourselves. We occupy so small a space in the cosmos. What is man compared to the stars?

Must we, then, sit idle with folded hands? No! Let us work,—but as instruments of the One Master. We are so little : he is the One Worker. Blessed are we if we are accepted as instruments of His service, His work. Big plans and programmes,—let them go! Enough if we do, in our little, allotted field, the humble little service to which He calls us. Then shall we live true lives,—true, because dedicated,—dedicated and beautiful,—beautiful, in spite of what the world calls failure or defeat. Let us keep alive the cosmic sense, and we shall grow in humility and in that only service which makes life rich,—the service of love.

KRISHNA'S COMMUNISM

KRISHNA gives the essence of his spiritual communism in half a *sloka* in the Gita, when he says that the man who cooks food for himself alone is a thief! A new social order cannot arise if we continue to trample upon the teaching of the Lord. We must not cook food for ourselves only. Let us *share* our food with others. Share what we have,—share our money, our knowledge, our life with others, and we shall bear witness to the truth that God, verily, doth move in our society.

It was in the dark days of famine in Calcutta that I saw, some years ago, the picture of a mother. In her arms was a pretty child for whom she begged. But the mother failed to get food and the child collapsed in the mother's arms. That picture has haunted me, again and again. And I have, again and again, recalled the words of the Gita :— "He who cooks food for himself alone is no better than a thief." In such a world of "thieves," Krishna's true disciple moves with the longing in his heart to serve Krishna. He wanders, not to talk of creeds and ceremonies but to bear witness to Krishna's religion of love.

Krishna calls us to go forth among the people to share with them all we have. To give love to our neighbours is to *live* the Gita. And he who *lives* the Gita,—he draws others to Krishna.

PAINTING PICTURES

One day, an artist brings a beautiful picture to Tolstoy,—a picture of "The Last Supper." A moving picture this! Jesus is about to go from this world. He is about to take up the Cross. And before leaving, the Master meets his disciples.

In this picture, Jesus is represented as washing the feet of his disciples. What a lesson in humility! The disciples have been quarrelling among themselves as to who is the greatest in their midst. Jesus takes up a water basin and washes the feet of his disciples. Jesus fain would teach them the truth :—"He is the greatest who is a servant."

The artist shows his picture to Tolstoy and wishes to know if he has painted well. Tolstoy looks at the picture and after a few moments says :—"If you had loved deeper, you would have painted better." The artist returns with the picture to paint better.

You all are painters. What pictures are you painting? If a brother was angry with you, did you give him anger in return? Did you meet unkindness with unkindness, or with goodwill and patience? What have been your action pictures? And what have been your thought pictures? Your thought forms? Within you is the Master! What pictures of the Master have you been painting? If you loved deeper, you would paint better.

Some have been painting pictures of money and pleasure, forgetting the noble ideals of service and sacrifice. O, paint some pictures of the Master! Paint them in these two colours,—purity and love. In your waking hours and in your subconscious self, paint the Master's pictures. Paint them in purity and love. And you will be blessed.

PĀGAL

"PAGAL" they called him. And that word means a "fool." He was a "pure fool,"—a fool in the Lord of Love.

In the heart of this "Pagal" was a wonderful love for all,—for men of different religions and diverse nations,—for men and birds and beasts.

His father gave him money to open a shop and sell corn and make a livelihood. He realised that more than livelihood was life. He gave away corn gratis to the poor and needy. In a few days the shop was shut!

Little ones he loved : and to them he sang the Name of the Lord of Love. And they loved to hear Pagal's stories and songs!

Cholera broke out in his village : and "Pagal" went about, from door to door, with a chest giving medicines free and nursing the sick. Greatly was he blessed : for he cured those he nursed.

And one day there came to him a learned pundit from a great university and spoke learned things of ancient and modern religions and then asked :—"O saint of God! what is your religion?"

And Pagal said :—"I am a *murkha* : little have I learnt from the books. But I have taken lessons at the feet of the Lord. And He has taught me a New Religion."

And the pundit asked :—"What is that New Religion?"

And Pagal said :—"It is not a ritual nor a creed. It is not a label nor an ism. The New Religion my Lord has taught me is to be a little one and to worship Him in little things."

And the pundit spoke no more, but went out wondering at Pagal whom the village-folk worshipped as a prophet and a saint of God!

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